

excellent condition—I observed him from only two or three yards. I flushed him twice more and lost him in a corn field. Two days later, exactly the same experience happened to me at the very same spot. Can you give me an explanation please. Don't forget the bird was strong on the wing, and seemed very loth to leave his 'friends'. The height of the spot is about 6000' or 6500'.

REGIMENTAL CENTRE,  
HAPPY VALLEY,  
SHILLONG, ASSAM.  
27th November 1946.

E. G. DEEKS.

20.—NOTE ON THE MIGRATIONS OF SWINHOE'S SNIPE  
[*CAPELLA MEGALA* (SWINHOE)] AND FANTAIL SNIPE  
[*C. GALLINAGO* (LINN.)] IN MALAYSIA.

There are three possible varieties of snipe to be found in the Malay Peninsula, *Capella stenura*, *C. gallinago* and *C. megala*, respectively the pintail, fantail and Swinhoe's (or Chinese) snipe. The first and second are so identical in appearance that only a careful scrutiny of the plumage will reveal the difference. The last (Swinhoe's) is a trifle larger and has a longer bill, otherwise it is easily passed over in a bag containing other snipe. The only certain method of rapid identification of all three species is by an examination of the tail feathers. In young birds of the year these may not be well developed enough to show the characteristic patterns, but the number of feathers at once reveals the difference between them. The fantail has 10 broad feathers, Swinhoe's snipe usually 20 of which the middle six are broad and the rest 'semi-pin' type, and the pintail on an average 26, of which the middle ten are broad and the rest true pin feathers.

The overwhelming majority of snipe shot in the Malay Peninsula are pintails. The occurrence of the other two is sporadic. Robinson and Chasen in *Birds of the Malay Peninsula* (Vol. III) simply say of the fantail that 'it visits in very much smaller numbers than the pintail and many of the latter can be killed for one of the former'. Of Swinhoe's snipe there is the statement that it is 'probably not at all rare in the Malay Peninsula'. As long ago as 1922 I was interested in the last species and kept a careful record of the number of snipe shot and the occurrence of fantails and Swinhoe's in the bag. Every bird was subjected to as careful an examination as possible. The results were as follows. The first examination was made on 6-2-22, and with an interval of two seasons, when I hardly shot any snipe, it was maintained up to and including 1936. The grounds covered were both on the east and west of the main range—the backbone of the peninsula. No specially big bags were made in any one season—the biggest being 206 in 1928-9 season. A total of 1,360 birds were scrutinised giving an analysis of pintail 1,350, fantail 5 and Swinhoe's 5. The bags were made at no particular dates

through the season and no apparent deduction can be made from this. The rare species were shot almost equally on both sides of the peninsula. It is clear that, unless my totals were weighted to a most unlucky degree, and allowing for mistakes, both the fantail and Swinhoe's snipe are rarities in the Malay Peninsula.

Records from two other countries to the west and east of the Peninsula, have lately come to my notice. Mr. Banks in the annual reports on the Sarawak museum records the occurrence of these species in Sarawak over a period of four years—1927, 1928, 1929, and 1931. Unfortunately no reference is made to the number of pintail shot, presumably considerable as it is the common snipe of the country, but the other two species are evidently worth recording as rarities. The figures are—1927. 3 fantail, 2 Swinhoe. 1928. 2 fantail. 1929. 1 fantail, 1 Swinhoe. 1931. 2 fantail. 2 Swinhoe.

In a note on the distribution of Swinhoe's snipe in Bengal in *Journ., Bomb. Nat. Hist. Soc.*, Vol. 42, p. 442, by Mr. R. J. Clough (1940), there is the remarkable record—

'The first Swinhoe's snipe to turn up in a total of over 16600 in bags made since 1926-7 all within a radius of 40 miles from Calcutta' (all examined for varieties). The fantail there is the common visitor.

In the Phillipines *megala* is said to be 'very abundant at certain seasons in the ricefields'. (Hachisuka).

The bird's migration is evidently in an easterly direction towards the Moluccas rather than south and west. It is noticeable that the general line apparently follows the northern edge of the Sunda shelf, and at right angles to the prevailing wind—the N.E. (China) monsoon—which blows strongly during that season.

SEEND, WILTSHIRE.  
November 1945.

J. E. KEMPE.

## 21.—OCCURRENCE OF THE WHOOPER SWAN [*CYGNUS CYGNUS* (LINN.)] AND GREATER EUROPEAN BUSTARD (*OTIS TARDA* LINN.) IN THE PUNJAB.

His Excellency the Governor has asked me to write and tell you about the occurrence of several unusual birds in the Peshawar District during the last month.

On the 29th December 1946 a single lone Whooper swan was shot at Dera Mohmin on the Kabul River in the Peshawar District. This is the third occasion in the last thirty years when this bird has been met with in this area. One was shot at the same spot by Mr. Domely I.P. in December 1910, and another by Brigadier Sir Hissamuddin Khan from a flock of four in 1927.

A Greater European Bustard was shot on the Cajuri Plain on the 5th January 1947. It appeared to be a young female in rather poor condition, and its weight when cleaned was about 5½ lbs.